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AUTHOR Rookey, T. Jerome
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ABSTRACT

These studies were conducted to verify and elaborate upon the work of Dr. John L. Holland. Dr. Holland (1959) found that teacher ratings have limited value as predictors of student creativity. The first study was conducted to arrive at or depart from Holland's findings. The second study was conducted to study the relationship of training in the arts to ability to rate student creativity. The third study was an attempt to break the evaluation task down into finer components. The final study provided the teachers with external rankings of their students' creativity. The studies utilized ten 5th grades, students and teachers from a special summer creative arts program, two 5th grades, and thirteen 5th grades, respectively. Results or conclusions were (1) the first study resulted in no discernible pattern of teacher response, (2) the second study found no significant differences between specially trained teachers and the teachers from a normal academic program, (3) the third study major finding was that the teachers' student ratings displayed bias in value, and (4) the final study reflected the strength of the teachers' value system. (Author/DB)

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FOUR STUDIES OF THE ELEMENTARY TEACHER AND STUDENT CREATIVITY

by T. Jerome Rookey

Objectives of the Inquiry

These studies were conducted to verify and elaborate upon the work of Dr. John L. Holland. Dr. Holland (1959) found that teacher ratings have limited value as predictors of student creativity. He stated that the teacher preferred the intelligent to the creative student. His teachers seemed to rate on "potential for leadership" rather than creativity. To the extent that he was correct, the ramifications for education are extreme.

The first study was conducted specifically to arrive at or depart from Holland's findings.

The second study was conducted to study the relationship of training in the arts to ability to rate student creativity. It was felt that teachers who were more familiar with creative activity, as opposed to straight academics, might be more sensitive to student creativity. If this hypothesis were true, there would be a logical step in terms of training which could be taken.

The third study was an attempt to break the evaluation task down into finer components. This way the pattern(s), which were operating, would become discernible. It was hoped that this would change the complexion of the task.

The final study provided the teachers with external rankings of their students' creativity. It was felt that the exhibited ambiguity might be relevant to the evaluative task only. If this were true, then the problem for education would be to simply provide external ratings.

TM C01 406

Methods

For the first study, we utilized ten 5th grades. The ten teachers met with the staff and discussed the project, definitions and rating technique. For thirty days following the meeting, the teachers observed their students. At the end of this time, the students completed the Pennsylvania Assessment of Creative Tendency and each teacher ranked her students on nine traits as well as overall creativity.

For the second study, students and teachers from a special summer creative arts program participated. The teachers were all certified in one or more of the arts, such as drama, fine art and music. Each teacher nominated the students in his group who demonstrated a high degree of behavior in any of the nine traits and/or overall creativity. They also nominated those students who demonstrated least behavior in the areas.

For the third study, two 5th grades were intensively studied. Three creativity measures and the Stanford-Binet were administered to the students. The teachers utilized two evaluative measures. The results of the teacher and student measures were studied for patterns of relationships.

In the final study, thirteen 5th grades were assessed and the teachers were provided with student profiles. The teachers were then queried as to their reaction to the profiles and their plans for using these profiles.

Results and/or Conclusions

The first study resulted in no discernible pattern of teacher response. The relationship of the teacher rating to student performance varied randomly from teacher to teacher. This led to the conclusion that Holland was at least partially correct, but that the situation was more complex than he had indicated.

The results of the second study did not display any significant differences between these specially trained teachers and the teachers in the

first study. The pattern of relationship between the PACT scores and the teacher nominations was not consistent from class to class. The conclusion of this study was that teachers from a specialized arts program cannot be said to be better judges of student creativity than teachers from a normal academic program.

The major finding of the third study was that while the teachers operated under a common definition of creativity, their student ratings displayed bias in value. Each teacher operated under a different set of values which, in turn, served to influence the way in which the global definition (i.e. creativity) is applied. The variance among ratings is not due to the global concept. The disagreement rests with perception and value of the student behaviors. The students' behavior was not evaluated against the common definition but was strained through a weighted perception, evaluated and then applied to the definition.

The final study reflected the strength of the teachers' value system. The teachers tended to anticipate the rankings an "outside tester" would yield. However, two-thirds indicated that they would not use the information supplied by the testing. It was concluded that informing the teachers of class rank was not enough to cause a change in program planning.

Educational Importance

In a society dedicated to progress, the premium for creativity is increasingly dear. One of the most perplexing questions about creativity has been who shall evaluate the child's creativity. These studies suggest that it is not the teacher.

One could even go so far as to say that the student would be better off if the teacher did not concern herself with student creativity.